

# The Power Of The Network

Building Partnerships Based  
Upon Common IT Backbones

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Jim Vilker, [cuasterisk.com](http://cuasterisk.com)

# Introducing cuasterisk.com

- Defines a culture of collaboration
  - In practice
  - In spirit of participation
  - In business strategy and design

“To truly inspire collaboration a CUSO must start with a rich set of commonalities and a belief by credit union leaders that they can overcome their differences, while still serving their memberships as individuals.”

*Randy Karnes, CEO  
CU\*Answers*

# Introducing cuasterisk.com

- Defines a business initiative
  - CU\*Answers desires to collaborate with everyone
  - Created a division designed to foster collaborative efforts
  - Declare ourselves in the business
  - Builds on proven success and arms potential CUSOs with a ready-to-build mentality
  - Coordinates resources and business strategies



[www.cuasterisk.com](http://www.cuasterisk.com)

# Introducing cuasterisk.com

- Defines a network of partners
  - CU\*Answers
  - CU\*Northwest
  - CU\*South
  - Xtend
  - eDOC Innovations
  - WESCO Net
  - Processing Alliance



# Defining the Network

- What Network?
  - IT backbone
    - Intranet
    - Phone
    - Data Processing
      - Third Party
      - Security
      - D/R
  - Of Peers

“More than just a corporate culture, a standing intent to collaborate at CU\*NorthWest means that network partners should leverage a common technology layer. Beyond our shared core processing product (CU\*BASE), we share a common digital phone structure, intranets, security protocols, e-service technologies, third-party switches, and more.”

*Greg Smith, CEO CU\*NW*

# Defining the Network

- Addresses resource capacity
  - Programming
  - Fixed Assets
  - Staffing
- Innovation
  - Driven by diverse client business requirements
  - Allows for proof of concept
  - Overlapping strategic development curves
- Allows for instant plug and play design
  - Think of it as business objects

# Emerging CUSO Initiatives

## Xtend

- Building on People businesses
  - Call Center
  - Audit Link
  - Payroll
  - Collections
  - Bookkeeping and reconciliation



# Emerging CUSO Initiatives

## eDOC Innovations

- Appending the Network with
  - Programming talent
  - Development concepts
  - System integration





# Emerging CUSO Initiatives

## MicroLender Payday Lending

- A whole new business design
  - A CUSO/credit union partnership
  - Playing in a new market space
  - Creation of new and diversified revenue streams

Retailer Direct: MicroLender By Lender\*VP

# New CUSO Initiatives

## **CUSO Formations**

- DC Area
- Ohio
- New York

## **CUSO Businesses**

- Call Center
- Audit Link
- Payroll
- Collections
- Bookkeeping and reconciliation

# Experiences To Date

## (Geographical)

- The Northwest and Midwest
  - Considerably more aggressive
  - Creating collaboration between CUs and through the CUSO
  - Do not erect barriers to entry
  - Do not seem focused on the big plays as much as finding any commonalities to grow upon
  - Member focused (trying to get the noise out of the credit union)
  - Continuously building on “The Power of Ownership”

# Experiences To Date

## (Geographical)

- Eastern
  - Picking up steam
  - Driven by data processing turnovers
  - IT really seems to get it and it is beginning to roll uphill
  - Mentoring and example pool is great
  - Understand “The Power of Ownership”

# Experiences To Date

## (Strategically)

- Commonalities exist but understanding the beauty of a common IT backbone is frequently seen as a barrier
- Single focus
  - Not leveraging potential
  - Doing it the same way with different people
  - Focused on the financial end more so than the collaborative potential
- The politics of partnership formation
- The chronological order of events appear to be overwhelming
- Lack of a get-started-somehow mentality
- Finding the entrepreneurial spirit

# Experiences To Date

## (Strategically) Bright Side

- Collaboration is the flavor of the month
- Examples are popping up with greater frequency
- Managers are truly beginning to understand the need for collaboration
  - In some cases to continue to exist
  - In others to amplify the member experience
- Our industry is flush with investment capital
- The old way of making money isn't working

# Your Experiences

- How are you building your own “Power of the Network” culture?
- How is your organization committed to collaboration and finding new partners for innovation?
- What commonalities are you building upon with other CUSOs and credit unions?
- How have you overcome barriers to partnership formation?

# Benefiting on a New Network Business Design

- Supplies the backbone for:
  - Organic growth
  - Contagious collaborative business initiatives
- Builds on commonalities to:
  - Make the partnering process easy and exciting
  - Foster innovative thought
  - Leverage talent and infrastructure
- Creates an environment which naturally makes leaders thing bigger
  - How can I do this for my member?
  - How can I do this for a network of a million members?



# From Your Perspective

Ask yourselves these questions:

Do you have the skills that might make you the catalyst partner for big things?

Do you have the network resources that will make you the hub of big new business activities?

Do you have the reason or need to grow through the new network economies of today's marketplace?

# Contact

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